CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 27 February 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Mutuale Kikanke (Zaire)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 614th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, I am happy to wish a warm welcome to His Excellency Andrzej Kostarczyk, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland, who has expressed the wish to address the Conference today. The Under-Secretary of State, who is particularly experienced in the field of international law and is a member of parliament, has been a member of Solidarity since its establishment. In 1990, he founded the Political Council of the Centre Alliance Party, and in 1991 he was appointed to the Committee of Presidential Advisers. Mr. Andrzej Kostarczyk has occupied the post of Under-Secretary of State since July 1991.

On the list of speakers for today are the representatives of Poland, Hungary, Chile, Canada and China. I now have pleasure in giving the floor to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland, His Excellency Andrzej Kostarczyk.

Mr. KOSTARCZYK (Poland): Mr. President, may I first of all express my deep thanks for your kind words of welcome? I would like to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference, and I wish you every success in the discharge of your responsibilities. You may rest assured of our full cooperation and support in this regard. Permit me to extend my compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Komatina, to whom, I have been informed, we shall bid farewell today. My delegation has always very highly appreciated his great professionalism, and the able and calm manner with which he assisted the work of the Conference. For the last several years, he has made a contribution of exceptional value to this body and we are sincerely grateful to him. May I also express our gratitude to Ambassador Berasategui for his great contribution to the smooth functioning of this forum?

It is a great honour for me to address this distinguished forum, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body. Taken together with its predecessor bodies, the Conference on Disarmament stands out not only by virtue of its record of achievement and disarmament expertise but also for the fact that it is a body which has been meeting at the Palais des Nations for almost three decades now.

Dating back to the bipolar world of the early 1960s, the Conference survived the confrontation of the cold war, witnessed the demise of the Warsaw Treaty and saw the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. From a world dominated by the arms race, it has emerged into a new strategic and political environment where the exigencies of ideologically motivated politics have given way to the rule of international law and concern for well-being, security, justice and democracy for all. With the threat of a global nuclear conflict receding in the wake of such important disarmament agreements as INF, CFE and START, international security is being increasingly predicated on

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international solidarity and cooperation aimed at responding more effectively to any threats that could endanger the achievement of a new international order. These threats are nowadays as much political, economic, social and environmental in nature as they are military.

While in the light of the foregoing it would be short-sighted to claim that disarmament efforts are less imperative these days than before, there is some merit in comments made in the course of the general debate at the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly that armaments have ceased to be the principal point of reference in inter-State relations. If the basic correctness of this premise is accepted, the Conference on Disarmament will have to draw inevitable conclusions with implications for its agenda.

Negotiations on the convention on chemical weapons have entered a final and decisive stage. The determination expressed unanimously in General Assembly resolution 46/45 C clearly indicates that the completion of work on the convention this year is within the reach of the Conference on Disarmament. In this connection, I would like to take this opportunity to express our satisfaction at the appointment of the distinguished Permanent Representative of Germany, Ambassador Adolf Ritter von Wagner, to the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. I wish him all the best in discharging his demanding duties and offer him the full cooperation of the Polish delegation in this task.

There is a good basis for optimism. Indeed, the Conference has before it only a few of the outstanding issues that require final decisions. Among them, the most important ones concern the challenge inspection regime, the pattern of routine verification in the chemical industry and the composition of the executive council. Challenge inspection is essential for the effectiveness of the verification regime of the convention. In order to be acceptable to all States it should encompass a proper balance between the requirement to ensure its high efficiency and the need to protect sensitive and confidential information that is not related to chemical weapons. Requesting a challenge inspection should be the responsibility of the requesting State. It would be unrealistic, and even detrimental to the efficiency of such an inspection, to envisage any role for the organization in the assessment of the request in the initial phase, apart, perhaps, from making a technical assessment that all the necessary elements are contained in the request in accordance with the established procedures.

Poland welcomes the emerging consensus on the need to expand the scope of inspections in the chemical industry. Broad coverage of relevant peaceful chemical industry activities constitutes an important confidence-building measure. We are also pleased with the positive attitude of the representatives of chemical industry towards the convention and their recognition of its role in facilitating trade and cooperation in this field. It augurs well for achieving agreement on this issue.

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The Conference cannot delay its decision on the composition of the executive council. Positions of States in this regard as well as on criteria to be applied are already well identified. Early agreement on the composition of the executive council and related matters will greatly facilitate the work of the Conference on other, more substantive issues.

I should also like to mention one additional issue to which my Government attaches particular importance, namely, the question of old or abandoned chemical weapons. Our position in this regard is clear - responsibility for the destruction of such weapons lies with the abandoning State.

As is well known, Poland - like many other members of the Conference on Disarmament - has already put on record its willingness to become an original signatory of the convention. We trust that in the interest of the effectiveness and universality of the future convention, all members of the Conference will be in this group.

We also believe that the Conference on Disarmament will submit to the forthcoming forty-seventh session of the General Assembly an agreed final draft of a convention on chemical weapons for its endorsement and subsequent signature. In this connection, I wish to express to the delegation of France our appreciation for the offer, made by President François Mitterrand at the recent Security Council "summit meeting" in New York, to hold in Paris, before the year's end, a special conference to sign the convention.

The question of the continued integrity and effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime has always figured prominently among the top concerns of the international community. As the Persian Gulf conflict has borne out, the concern was well founded. The mortal threat inherent in a possible erosion of the regime has perceptibly grown in the wake of the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the ensuing confusion over who exactly does, or does not, control the vast nuclear armoury and the associated scientific and technological expertise of the former USSR. It is quite natural for the international community, therefore, to urge the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States which possess nuclear weapons on their territory to forswear them and accede forthwith to the NPT - the mainstay of the non-proliferation regime. The consolidation of this regime is very much at the heart of the concerns of the members of the international community. Indeed, it was with great satisfaction that they welcomed the recent accession of France and China to that instrument. They also applauded the addition of the Republic of South Africa and three other African States to the list of States parties to the Treaty. These welcome developments - in our view - reflect a mounting tide of support for the NPT and for the need for its universalization. Poland hopes that this important instrument will be declared of unlimited duration by the 1995 NPT Review Conference.

The Conference on Disarmament also has a standing obligation to deal effectively with the question of a nuclear test ban - which constitutes part and parcel of the non-proliferation regime.

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Among the issues which the General Assembly has invited this body to address is the question of practical measures related to the transfer of high technology with military applications. We would like to see this matter included in the agenda of the Conference. In this connection, Poland welcomed with keen interest the concept - referred to at the Security Council "summit" meeting on 31 January last - of an international science and technology centre in Russia, in order to stem the possible dissemination of know-how in the field of weapons of mass destruction and the related delivery technology.

Poland attaches major importance to the question of openness and transparency in armaments, including international arms transfers. We fully share the rationale behind General Assembly resolution 46/36 L that it is necessary to examine the international aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, including military holdings and procurement through national production.

The experience which Europe has gathered in the practical application of the CSCE principles and the structuring of cooperative security on the continent is eloquent proof that openness in military matters is a confidence- and security-building measure whose relevance may well go beyond one single region. We believe - in particular - that if put into effect and consistently applied on a sustained basis, a conventional arms transfer register, under the auspices of the United Nations, could become the kernel of a world-wide confidence- and security-building measure. We strongly believe that the Conference on Disarmament must have a role to play in the consideration and development of this measure, as it has been invited by the General Assembly to do. Poland, which for quite some time now has participated in the standardized reporting system on military expenditures, is prepared to join constructively in any efforts which the Conference on Disarmament resolves to undertake in that regard.

The Conference on Disarmament must find its proper role in the changing international environment. To live up to new expectations, a new and imaginative approach is also needed to issues concerning the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament.

To conclude, I would like to wish the Conference on Disarmament every success in its efforts, particularly the successful completion of the chemical weapons convention. Such a result would greatly contribute to the credibility of this body. It would - above all - demonstrate its ability to use the possibilities opened up by the profound politcal changes sweeping Europe and the world at large.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank His Excellency the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland very much for his important statement, and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Tóth.

Mr. TOTH (Hungary): Mr. President, let me at the very beginning of my statement express our heartfelt welcome to you on your accession to the high post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. We are convinced that

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your well-known diplomatic abilities will guide our endeavours aimed at resolving the still outstanding problems to a successful end. Let me also extend our congratulations to your predecessors, Ambassador Horacio Arteaga of Venezuela and Ambassador Naste Calovski of Yugoslavia, whose highly professional contributions paved the way for finding mutually acceptable answers to many organizational and substantial difficulties. I would like to welcome in our midst the distinguished Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Kostarczyk. The representatives of the respective groups will bid farewell later today in a more formal manner to our Secretary-General, Ambassador Komatina. Let me also, however, take this opportunity to extend to Ambassador Komatina our deepest appreciation for all his work in the CD and wish him well and success in his future activities.

The new negotiating mandate agreed on last summer and confirmed in January puts additional responsibility on delegations taking part in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons of the Conference on Disarmament. The ambitious but by no means unrealistic target to conclude the chemical weapons convention by 1992 requires further serious efforts on the part of the negotiators and an enhanced spirit of compromise. National positions need to be reviewed, however difficult that may be, if we are sincere about our intentions of achieving a chemical weapons ban.

The very welcome concluding phase of the multilateral negotiations on the comprehensive and global prohibition of chemical weapons appears to be no less difficult than the previous negotiating stages. Resolving a number of crucial problems that have been deferred over the years due to their contentious nature demands prompt decisions based on compromise. It is clear for us that such bold steps are not easy to take, but they are simply inevitable if we are to succeed. The mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons adopted by consensus leaves no room whatsoever for delaying concerted action on issues as yet unresolved.

We may need further initiatives aimed at speeding up the course of negotiations. All of us have to be aware of the fact that we don't have much time. This is why the approach of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons to the outstanding issues enjoys our full agreement and support.

As Hungary has already outlined several times, our basic goal is to have an effective convention that lives up to the high requirements set by the complexity of the problems. As a humble contribution to this aim, allow me to draw your attention to document CD/1135. In this document Hungary is presenting its third annual declaration on the activities of its chemical industry as required by the draft provisions of the chemical weapons convention. The presentation is fully in line with Hungary's unilateral commitment put forward in 1989 at the United Nations General Assembly, declaring that Hungary was ready to comply with all the provisions of the convention under negotiation and to act in full conformity with it at this stage already. We firmly believe in the confidence-building effects of such

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measures. Let me welcome at this point the approach of document CD/1129, submitted by Australia at our last plenary meeting, which seems to share the main purpose of our paper.

Having introduced our annual declaration, let me touch on a few unresolved points on the agenda of the CW negotiations. In our view challenge inspection is an indispensable element of any disarmament agreement. This is even more valid in the case of the chemical weapons convention, where both the relative easiness of producing dangerous chemicals and the enormous range of relevant chemical industry render the establishment of a foolproof verification system practically impossible. Earlier in my statement I had the opportunity to recall one part of the 1989 Hungarian initiative. Our unilateral commitments, however, went much further than that and also included the vital issue of verification. In fact, already three years ago Hungary stated its readiness to receive - on a reciprocal basis - verification, including on-site inspections in accordance with the objectives of a chemical weapons ban. In practical terms, this step means that any country ready to accept the same obligations vis-à-vis Hungary is welcome to carry out inspections on Hungarian soil. It stems from this unilateral measure that for us the preferred solution of the question of challenge inspections is the most stringent regime which is still acceptable for other negotiating partners. We had no serious difficulties with the so-called "classical" approach, but we also realize that national interests concerning the protection of sensitive information not directly related to the convention need to be reconciled with the objectives of the chemical weapons ban. This flexible approach, however, doesn't stand without its limits. Narrowing down conceptual differences regarding the role of the executive council, the obligations and rights of the inspected State, the question of observers, the perceived danger of abuse and the modalities for action following the preparation of the inspection report must not lead to a total dilution of the challenge regime. If the original aim of finding satisfactory answers to serious compliance concerns is lost from sight, the very sense of challenge inspections will be endangered.

It is clear that besides the technical complications associated with challenge inspections, this method of verification is overburdened by political implications. One of the highly political issues is the role of the executive council in the process of a challenge inspection. We strongly believe that a challenge inspection request needs prompt action, especially if it is to detect a suspected violation of the convention. Regular and protracted intervention by the executive council in the required automaticity in responding to an inspection request will certainly cause delays that might adversely affect the inspection procedure. Noting the justifiable concerns with regard to possible abuse or requests that clearly fall outside the scope of the convention, the setting up of an exceptional decision-making mechanism at the very beginning of the challenge process is within the limits of acceptability. This mechanism has to be quick and effective, and the possibility of stopping the inspection procedure should be linked to the consent of all members of the executive council which have no direct interest in the specific case. It seems to be undesirable, however, to set up a political filter at the beginning of the challenge inspection process. In our judgement, it is after the mission of the inspection team has been

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accomplished that the executive council will have an important role to play. It is at that time that the executive council, capitalizing on all the trust that the community of States parties has in its members, will exercise its authority by reviewing the situation, considering the possible need for further action and proposing specific measures to redress the situation.

Let me also say a few words on the issue of observers. Hungary, stemming from its openness, has no problem whatsoever with accepting observers accompanying an inspection team. We believe that whenever the presence of an observer may increase the possibility of clarifying a compliance concern, his or her participation is desirable for the achievement of the basic purposes of the convention. A possible violation is not only the concern of the requesting State, but of all States parties. Yet we also witnessed that the obligatory acceptance of observers caused problems for some delegations. Our belief is that the agreement reached at the consultations held by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador von Wagner, resolves the issue in a sensible manner, and we certainly endorse it.

As for the other element of the verification regime, Hungary shares the view that the system related to verifying the civilian chemical industry elaborated over the years does not really serve the underlying objectives. This is why we also welcomed new approaches aiming to integrate the major and relevant part of the international chemical industry in a more comprehensive system of verification. Unfortunately, after significant efforts to reflect these ideas in our negotiating work, we cannot yet speak of major achievements. The horizontal extension of verification activities in the chemical industry is causing problems for certain negotiating parties. If these concerns persist, we will eventually have to put up with a verification system that is neither cost-effective nor "purpose"-effective. In view of these apparent shortcomings, we will be faced again with a political decision whether the risk inherent in such an inadequate regime applicable to the chemical industry is within the confines of acceptability.

Finding the way out requires an answer to the basic question: what can we achieve through a routine verification system? If the aim is to set a regime which involves at least some elements of credibility, excluding the major part of relevant chemical industry from the scope of actual inspections simply doesn't make sense. A foolproof system is certainly no more than wishful thinking, but the rational distribution of limited financial, material and human resources must be a realistic goal. The idea of including facilities producing schedule 3 chemicals in the inspection regime is one that merits positive consideration. Such an extension of the scope of routine inspections would increase or even multiply the number of potentially inspected facilities in all corners of the world. But it is a simple fact that nearly all of these facilities are capable of producing large quantities of schedule 2 chemicals, and under the present "rolling text" this capability is simply left to the good intentions of the declaring State party. Of course, the actual functioning of any disarmament agreement is not possible without a degree of

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confidence in the system and in other States parties; still, we are of the opinion that confidence must be the result of verification and not the alternative to it.

The inspection of facilities producing schedule 3 chemicals could also be a step forward in a related field, namely the problem of schedules and guidelines. We are impressed by the efforts of the technical experts to find an optimum solution, though some of the argumentation concerning the placement of certain chemicals seems to be a bit too pragmatic. It certainly appears to cause fewer practical problems to put in schedule 2 chemicals of which the annual production is only a few tons, rather than others whose annual production can only be measured in thousands of tons. Nevertheless, the only criterion to govern putting a specific chemical in schedule 2 or 3 should be the degree of danger it poses to the basic goals of the convention. One can easily come to the conclusion that the real risk lies in higher rather than lower quantities of production. If, however, all facilities producing schedule 2 or schedule 3 chemicals face in one way or other the possibility of being inspected - and why not go back here to the idea of an ad hoc basis? - the risk is at least decreased.

The ability to disclose potential non-compliance is only one element of credible deterrence. The other factor is constituted by sanctions - sanctions against those States which do not abide by their voluntarily assumed international obligations. Hungary is ready to support the strictest possible regime of sanctions against violators of this convention. In this regard, special consideration should be given to cases of the use of chemical weapons, since this is practically the only form of violation which can be proved with almost total certainty.

Speaking about sanctions, obligations and verification, one cannot avoid the problem of universality and - in close connection to it - the still outstanding issues of article XI. Our endeavours to find a solution perhaps require a twofold approach. On the one hand, States remaining outside the convention should be urged to join. It is justified by the security interests of the whole international community that, after a reasonable period of time, the ways and means of persuasion should not only be political but economic as well. The convention should include carefully worded but concrete provisions guiding our future activities in this field. On the other hand, all States have to see clearly and be able to judge their situation even before signing the convention. This requires a sharp picture of both their obligations and their rights stemming from the convention. The balance of rights and obligations is perhaps the most important ingredient of universality. A situation where States parties, with all their political, financial and other obligations, were practically negatively discriminated against compared to some of the non-parties, would seem to be going against the requirement of reasonableness. In this field, we think that the approach outlined by the distinguished Ambassador of France in his 13 February plenary statement is a very positive one and merits further exploration.

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In almost every negotiating process of diplomacy a point is reached, somewhere in the finishing stage, where the potential financial implications for the contracting parties have to be addressed. We are happy to note that the chemical weapons negotiations have reached this phase, since it indicates that we are approaching the conclusion of our work. The implementation of the convention will entail two major types of costs for States parties. One is strictly national, like for example the establishing and maintaining of the national authority. Other expenses are related to the functioning of the organization to be set up under the convention. The various and extremely important functions to be performed by the organization will require substantial funds. The precise amount of these funds is as yet unknown to us, though some estimates have already been made. Whatever the sum may be, an adequate, equitable method for distributing costs has to be defined. We share the view that a single and simple formula based on the well-established United Nations scale of assessment would provide a workable solution to the problem of cost-sharing. The principles and characteristics of that formula are well known and are basically not disputed. In this way, it could provide a ready system for the sharing of costs to be borne by all future States parties.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement and his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Chile, Mr. Romero.

Mr. ROMERO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): My delegation has asked for the floor again to inform the plenary of the Conference of Disarmament of the content of an official statement made by the acting Foreign Minister of Chile on 12 February last on the subject of disarmament. This statement has been circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament with the number 1134 and contains the views of my country on two important issues for this mulitlateral forum: nuclear non-proliferation and chemical weapons. It reads as follows:

"I should like to announce some important advances in matters of international disarmament, a question to which the Government of Chile attaches the greatest importance.

"First, I wish to refer to the announcement of the President of France, François Mitterrand, at the United Nations Security Council Summit on 31 January last, concerning the ratification by his country of Additional Protocol I to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (better known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco). We welcome that decision as a significant move towards the desired goal of the entry into force of that treaty.

"When this French initiative is added to the Safeguards Agreement recently concluded by Argentina and Brazil with the International Atomic Energy Agency at Vienna, and to the favourable statements of the Government of Cuba regarding its ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, there is now justified hope that by the twenty-fifth anniversary of its signature in 1992, this instrument may begin to have effective validity.

(Mr. Romero, Chile)

"Pursuant to the permanent instructions of President Aylwin, the Ministry is taking the necessary diplomatic actions for the early consideration in OPANAL, which is the technical body established by the Treaty for such purposes, of the legal and technical procedures for strengthening and updating Tlatelolco and bringing it into force. In preparing such actions, this Ministry will coordinate with the national technical body concerned, the Chilean Nuclear Energy Commission.

"I should also like to mention as an interesting development in the international field the signature on 30 January last of a safeguards agreement between the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea and the Agency of Vienna which will enable IAEA to carry out the appropriate inspections of the installations and fissionable materials in that country. We have reason to hope that that agreement will be ratified and that, together with the agreement on reconciliation of the two Koreas, it will help to create a climate of security, peace and stability in that part of the world. I must point out that Chile supported the initiative of Australia, Canada and Japan urging the Government of North Korea to enter into this safeguards agreement and that our Ambassador to IAEA, as Chairman of the Group of 77 in Vienna, made important efforts to bring about consensus on the matter. This process taking place in a region of Asia adds to the explicit statements in favour of non-proliferation made by the States belonging to the new Commonwealth of Independent States and so considerably strengthens the global scope of international security.

"Another important dimension is that relating to the multilateral convention on chemical weapons which is being negotiated in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament and which unquestionably represents the most important international effort in the matter of disarmament and a significant contribution to the protection of the global environment. In that connection, it will be recalled that Foreign Minister Silva Cimma, along with his colleagues from Argentina and Brazil, signed the Mendoza Agreement, subsequently joined by the other Latin American States before and during the Presidential Summit of the Rio Group at Cartagena. At present, we are finalizing with Argentina and Brazil the contribution which the three countries can make to the procedures of verification and implementation of the future convention in keeping with the position taken in the Mendoza Agreement.

"Santiago, 12 February 1992."

The above-mentioned declaration is complemented by the letter sent by President Patricio Aylwin to the President of Mexico, Mr. Carlos Salinas de Gortari, relating to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signature of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, on 14 February last, which I shall also read in full.

"Sir,

"Today we commemorate a quarter of a century since the date of the historic signature of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America, the first example of an instrument which aspired to

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de-nuclearize one of the most extensive, populated and strategic regions of the world. This treaty, a veritable model for all subsequent endeavours in the field of disarmament and de-nuclearization, is permanent and of indefinite duration, it possesses a body for review and verification and a system for the settlement of disputes, and it enjoys a system of safeguards on the part of the nuclear States.

"Since we both formulated in a joint declaration our appeal to all States concerned to implement the Treaty of Tlatelolco, encouraging progress has been made towards this goal: the safeguards agreement signed by Argentina and Brazil with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the announcement by France that it will ratify Protocol I, automatically making French Guiana, Martinique and Guadeloupe de-nuclearized territories, and Cuba within OPANAL, to the effect that it will also join the Treaty.

"In these promising circumstances, Chile wishes to renew its vocation to work for peace and its firm resolve to contribute to the implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco throughout its geographical zone of application. To this end, my country promises its broadest cooperation and hopes that the meeting of OPANAL now beginning will represent the culmination of efforts to turn the Treaty of Tlatelolco into the most efficient tool for de-nuclearization, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy among member States.

"Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

"Patricio Aylwin Azocar
"President of Chile".

To conclude, I should like to inform the Conference that recently Chile notified the French depositary of the withdrawal of its reservations to the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

Mr. SHANNON (Canada): My principal purpose in speaking today is to draw to the attention of the Conference a number of papers which the Canadian delegation has either recently circulated to members and participants through the secretariat or is tabling today. In all, there are five such documents, some pertaining directly to our work and others of a broader scope and interest.

Since this is the first time that my delegation will be speaking at this session, Mr. President, let me first assure you of our full cooperation and express our confidence that under your chairmanship, this Conference will move forward expeditiously to tackle the many important issues the world community has put before it. Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the wise and skilful chairmanship of your predecessor, Ambassador Calovski, who led us through the difficult opening weeks of organizational work. And may I also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, whose work I first recognized in

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Belgrade many years ago and who is a friend and who has provided me with a lot of advice and helpful knowledge about the work of this Conference, so I regret his departure.

Now may I turn to the documents we have requested be circulated? First, there is our traditional annual compendium relating to the past year's work on the CWC. This is in three volumes, one covering the procès-verbal and two covering the working papers. It is being distributed as a formal CD document. I should express my hope that this will be the last set of such documents relating to the CWC negotiations that Canada will produce. We are now in the final phase of this long-drawn-out task, and such changes to the "rolling text" as may be developed during this 1992 CD session will in the end be incorporated in the CW convention itself. And even if, contrary to all our shared hopes and expectations, we do not manage to finish our task during this CD session, we presumably will be close enough to that goal no longer to require the sort of detailed record in easily accessable form of our ongoing and past work which these annual compendiums comprise.

Also being distributed as a formal CD document is a new Bibliography on Arms Control Verification 1961-1991, published by our Verification Research Unit in October of 1991. This was done partially in response to United Nations General Assembly resolution 45/65, which adopted the report of the Group of Experts on the role of the United Nations in verification and which, inter alia, recommended that the United Nations establish a consolidated data bank of published materials. The bibliography, while not proporting to be exhaustive, contains more than 1,500 entries and attempts to cover publications and submissions from Governments and international organizations as well as literature emanating from the research community. One of our aims in producing it was to aid government officials, diplomats and researchers in their work on arms control and disarmament.

Now, let me turn to the publication Verification to the Year 2000. As a result of the momentous events of the last few years, world leaders have, correctly, declared the cold war to be over. Many also believe that we are on the verge of a "new world order", which will be characterized by increased multilateral cooperation in the security field, including on arms control and disarmament matters. While acknowledging these recent, extraordinarily positive, changes in international relations, it is important to appreciate their boundaries. It would be erroneous in our view to see the end of the cold war as also the end of concerns about security or the necessity of negotiating and concluding meaningful agreements to control and reduce armaments. Canada believes that there will be a continuing requirement to pursue such agreements not only bilaterally and regionally, but also multilaterally, including within this forum, especially if we should in due course be able to agree on updating our agenda.

As long as arms control and disarmament agreements are important, and this seems likely to be true for the foreseeable future, it is essential that they be effectively verified. It is on this subject of the ongoing relevance of verification in the new world order that I would like to address a few

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comments. Canada continues to believe that in the words endorsed unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly a year and a half ago, "adequate and effective verification is an essential element of arms limitation and disarmament agreements". This is equally true today as it was in the past: the need for verification is not an East-West issue that died with the cold war. "Trust but verify" is not just a slogan but a reality that still has relevance multilaterally. It is a process that can have a dramatic and positive effect on the building of confidence among nations. A recent study conducted by a group of governmental experts for the United Nations Secretary-General underscored this theme. It defined verification succinctly as "a process which establishes whether the States parties are complying with their obligations under an agreement". As long as countries rely even partially for their security on the compliance of others with respect to arms control agreements, there will be a requirement for verification. Indeed, as forces come down in size, practical security requirements such as verification do not go away. Reliable verification may well become even more important because the impact of cheating in small amounts will be more significant than in the days of massive forces.

Within the new international framework which is now emerging it should be recognized that verification need be neither adversarial nor confrontational. Indeed, one of the more positive aspects of the new world order is the increased emphasis being given to multilateral cooperation, including on verification matters. The world is in the process of truly historic changes. We are fortunate that these events are characterized by a new-found willingness by many countries to cooperate on security-related matters and to reduce and control armaments. It is fervently to be hoped that this ethos will continue, but we cannot be certain of this. Now, when the political will towards multilateral cooperation is strong, is the time to build structures and institutions that can help assuage tensions should they rise again. Arms control and disarmament verification provides one way to accomplish this. If appropriate verification procedures are in place, compliance can be clarified and military capabilities made more evident. In an ideal environment, adequate and effective verification can help build and maintain confidence between nations; in the worst environment, it can facilitate the taking of such steps as may be necessary to protect national security when non-compliance becomes evident. It is with these thoughts as background that I would like to draw the attention of this body to the document entitled Verification to the Year 2000. This document had its genesis in the realization that the dramatic changes in the world would have significant effects on the verification of arms control and disarmament agreements. As a result, a research project was undertaken to explore the new requirements, challenges and opportunities likely to face the verification process in the 1990s. Four distinguished scholars of diverse backgrounds - two Americans and two Canadians - were invited to come together and focus on the following tasks: first, to identify trends with respect to the verification of arms control and disarmament agreements (including confidence-building), both bilateral and multilateral; second, to outline how these trends may be expected to evolve to the year 2000; and third, to suggest profitable areas for future research in this field. This report is the

(Mr. Shannon, Canada)

culmination of their efforts. It represents an innovative, insightful and rigorous attempt to examine developments over the next decade with respect to both bilateral and multilateral verification. We commend it to your attention.

We have asked the secretariat to distribute to all of your delegations informally two other publications which we expect may also prove of interest to you. One of these, entitled Verifying Limitations on Military Personnel, is the ninth in our series of Arms Control Verification Occasional Papers. One of the authors is Alex Morrison, whom those of you who have been attending the First Committee over the years will recall was for some time our Military Adviser to our Permanent Mission in New York. The other of these papers, which should be of more general interest, is entitled Towards Helsinki 1992: Arms Control in Europe and the Verification Process. It comprises the proceedings of the Eighth Ottawa Verification Symposium, which took place in our capital almost a year ago. We expect to be able to arrange for its distribution in the near future. That is all I have to say for the present, though I look forward to addressing our concerns and interests pertaining to the substantive elements on our agenda in due course. In the meantime we hope that the documentation which we are making available will be both useful and of real interest.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of China, Mr. Hu Xiaodi.

During the past 12 months a lot of work has been done in the negotiations on a chemical weapons convention. Among the progress achieved we have been able to start our preliminary but detailed discussions on the issue of challenge inspection, taking the four-State proposal as a basis. Substantive consultations have also started on the issue of the executive council, among

(Mr. Hu, China)

others. The new "rolling text" itself indicates the enormity of the work. However, if we are to achieve the goal of concluding the convention within this year, much difficult work remains to be done and a number of major issues have yet to be resolved - for instance, challenge inspection, verification of the civilian chemical industry, the executive council, abandoned chemical weapons, article XI of the convention, and so on. China has always maintained a positive position towards the chemical weapons convention and its negotiation, and the Chinese delegation hopes that fair and reasonable solutions can be found to all these issues so as to successfully realize the goal of completing the chemical weapons convention before the end of the year.

The fundamental purpose and objective of the future chemical weapons convention lie in the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all chemical weapons. To this end all States should undertake corresponding commitments, including the obligation to destroy the chemical weapons each has abandoned on the territory of another State. A just and thorough solution of the issue of chemical weapons abandoned by a foreign State is one of the most urgent tasks in the negotiations on the chemical weapons convention. And the purpose of my statement today is to introduce documents CD/1127 and CD/1130 tabled by the Chinese delegation upon instructions on the issue of abandoned chemical weapons. These two documents also bear the symbols CD/CW/WP.384 and CD/CW/WP.387.

First of all, in response to requests and proposals made by some delegations, the Chinese delegation is now providing, in the form of a CD document as well as a working paper of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, information on chemical weapons abandoned in China by a foreign State, with a view to promoting understanding and facilitating the work of the Conference and its Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons.

As is known to all, the Chinese people have in the past been victims of the use of chemical weapons by a foreign State, and even to this date such weapons are still causing tremendous losses and constitute a grave threat. After nearly half a century, such weapons continue to be discovered in China. They have done great harm to the safety of the Chinese people and their property and ecology. As the foreign State concerned has provided no information on the chemical weapons it abandoned in China, it is impossible to take the necessary precautionary measures when such weapons are discovered, and many injuries have occurred as a result. Preliminary statistics reveal that direct victims alone have numbered more than 2,000. Furthermore, the danger posed by such abandoned chemical weapons to the natural environment and to the safety of human beings is increasing. About 2.3 million pieces of chemical munitions abandoned in China by the foreign State have been found so far. Among them roughly 300,000 pieces have been destroyed or given preliminary treatment by China, with approximately 2 million pieces yet to be destroyed. Since most of these chemical munitions are still buried, the exact figure has yet to be verified after excavation. In addition, about 120 tons of toxic chemical agents abandoned by the foreign State in China have been discovered, among which more than 20 tons have been destroyed by China. The present state of affairs in this regard has been a source of bitter grievance and serious concern for the Chinese people.

(Mr. Hu, China)

Information on the types of these chemical munitions and toxic agents and their geographical distribution is contained in document CD/1127 submitted by my delegation. Please allow me to point out that, in the English text of this document, there are two technical errors, one towards the end of page 2 and the other towards the end of page 4. In this regard the secretariat has issued a corrigendum. The Chinese leadership and the Chinese delegation have on many occasions expounded our principled position and propositions on the issue of abandoned chemical weapons, and I am not going to repeat all of them today. However, in the interest of resolving the issue of abandoned chemical weapons in the negotiations as soon as possible, we find it necessary to emphasize the following. Firstly, the complete destruction of abandoned chemical weapons is of close relevance to the objective of the convention and constitutes an essential and important part of the convention. In this respect no gap or lacuna can be allowed. Secondly, the issue of abandoned chemical weapons is by no means a mere "historical problem", but rather an important one of relevance to both the present and the future. Nor is it an issue that concerns only a few victim States, but rather one that has a bearing on the basic rights and obligations of all States parties. It is, therefore, an important issue of relevance to the maintenance of international peace and security. Thirdly, the key to the resolution of the issue of abandoned chemical weapons lies in the attribution of responsibility for their destruction. The convention must lay down in fair and clear terms the principle that a State which has used and abandoned chemical weapons shall bear the responsibility for their destruction.

On the basis of the above-mentioned position of principle, the Chinese delegation has put forward and will continue to put forward concrete and constructive proposals. For example, bearing in mind the similarities as well as the dissimilarities in the circumstances in which chemical weapons were abandoned, we maintain that the following wording should be included in the convention: "Each State party undertakes to destroy all chemical weapons it has abandoned on the territory of another State, and the States concerned may on this basis seek proper solutions through consultations among themselves." The second part of this wording is flexible enough to accommodate all kinds of circumstances and the corresponding solutions.

Apart from the key issue of responsibility for destruction, we are of the opinion that it is also necessary to make some additions and modifications related to abandoned chemical weapons in articles III and IV and their annexes. Proceeding from these points, the Chinese delegation has outlined its position of principle, propositions and specific proposals on the issue of abandoned chemical weapons in document CD/1130. We hope that these propositions and proposals will be considered in all seriousness by the CD and the Ad Hoc Committee on CW and fully reflected in the "rolling text", and in this regard we are ready to continue our constructive cooperation with all other delegations.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of China for his statement and his kind words addressed to myself.

We have now reached the end of the list of speakers. Does any other representative wish to speak? The representative of Japan, Ambassador Donowaki, has the floor.

Mr. DONOWAKI (Japan): Mr. President, first of all, I would like to reaffirm my delegation's pleasure in seeing you in the Chair, and we are confident that under your able and skilful chairmanship our work in the CD will make successful progress. I should also like to express to the previous President, Ambassador Calovski of Yugoslavia, my delegation's sincere appreciation for the great contribution he made at the beginning of this session of the Conference. May I also state that we listened with great interest to the important statement made by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland, His Excellency Mr. Kostarczyk? I should also like to express my delegation's gratitude for the contribution made by Ambassador Konatina over the years in the Conference on Disarmament and our regret that he will be leaving us soon.

The purpose of my intervention is, of course, to state the position of my Government on the question raised by the previous speaker. I listened with much interest to the statement that the Chinese Government has great interest in achieving the chemical weapons convention this year, and was very encouraged by the reference to the four-nation proposal on challenge inspection to which the Chinese Government has been giving serious consideration, since Japan is one of the co-sponsors of the four-nation proposal. I am very much encouraged by that fact. On the question of old and abandoned chemical weapons, my delegation has taken a consistent policy for some time, but perhaps it is important to repeat it to help achieve an early conclusion of the negotiations. The purpose of our negotiations, as the previous speaker pointed out, is to achieve a convention which will effectively destroy existing chemical weapons. Of course, we know that some States have a large stock of chemical weapons. One of the major purposes of the convention is to deal with these. At the same time, however, we should also take into account the importance of destroying old and abandoned chemical weapons. The purpose of the convention is also, in the long term, to prevent the production of chemical weapons by introducing a system to check compliance with it - a very complicated task. That is why our negotiations are going through very difficult phases. So these are the broad objectives of our convention which should be formulated in such a way that there will be no gaps or loopholes in achieving this purpose.

We have to make sure that all possible cases of old and abandoned chemical weapons will be covered by the convention, not only those referred to in the working paper submitted concerning our two countries, but also others - and each case is different. For that reason, the work and consultations being conducted by Friend of the Chair Ambassador Brotodiningrat of Indonesia are very important, and we highly appreciate the efforts he is making. My delegation will make every constructive effort to cooperate with him in finding an early solution, together with other countries.

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

However, my delegation's position is that this Conference is not the forum for bilateral issues. In the case of the latter, we have been making honest and serious efforts, apart from the negotiations in this Conference, and we are working towards a successful settlement of them. I do not wish therefore to dwell upon this side of our efforts. I will simply state that the working paper submitted this morning gives preliminary data exemplifying one case of abandoned weapons.

In order to arrive at a satisfactory framework for dealing with the question of abandoned chemical weapons, I have to reiterate the positions we have consistently taken on this question. Old and abandoned chemical weapons discovered by States parties to this convention will not all be of the same type - there are many different varieties. Also, it is a fact that any State party has sovereignty over its territory and should have primary concern for the destruction of such weapons. I do not insist that this should be stated as a responsibility, but rather as a concern - in normal cases - for the country which finds such weapons on its territory. The amount may be small, and the time that has elapsed between the abandoning and discovery may be so long that they may not be poisoned or dangerous and might perhaps be dealt with as a question of environmental hazard. This should be easy to do in many cases. However, there may be other cases where a country discovering such old and abandoned weapons may not find it easy to destroy them.

As regards provision in the convention - as may be supported by some States members of this Conference - if destruction is to be made the responsibility of the abandoning State, then it is my delegation's view that this may introduce complications, because the abandoning State will not normally have jurisdiction or the sovereign right to enter the territory of another State party where abandoned chemical weapons may be discovered; also, it may sometimes be very difficult to establish or identify the country which may have abandoned them. The abandoning State may not be a State party to the Convention. Thus, a loophole or gap may be created, i.e., that nobody will destroy such dangerous abandoned weapons. The existing provisions of the "rolling text", after many years of negotiations, seem to have received the support of most nations. My delegation believes that if it is established that a certain country has abandoned old chemical weapons and the country where they are discovered wishes the abandoning country to cooperate, such an arrangement should certainly be provided for in the convention. We will carefully study the concrete proposals which the Chinese delegation has presented in the past and today. In particular, my delegation is interested in the proposal regarding article X, for cases where the identity of abandoned chemical weapons has not been established, providing for assistance in their destruction by the technical secretariat. That kind of provision is one way to close the gap, so in that sense my delegation will be greatly interested in studying further that kind of very constructive proposal.

Also I should like to point out that even in the Chairman's summary on this question for 1990 it was stated that the discovering State should not a priori be made responsible for the destruction of such weapons. At the same time, however, it did not state that the abandoning State should have this

(Mr. Donowaki, Japan)

responsibility. The question of responsibility is a very delicate one and if we try to provide for the responsibility of States retroactively for who knows how many years, we will create some confusion. For that reason my delegation believes that a more practical approach, rather than establishing such responsibility, would be to make appropriate provisions to settle the question satisfactorily. My delegation is ready to make concrete proposals which should be feasible, practical and conducive to the settlement of this question in our negotiations.

Of course, we are aware that in connection with the question of old and abandoned chemical weapons, there are suggestions that perhaps a cut-off date should be set at a certain point in the past which might help solve the problem to a great extent. My delegation may agree to such suggestions. But all these matters should be discussed in the consultations to be conducted by the Friend of the Chair, the Ambassador of Indonesia.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Japan for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me.

As you know, during the informal consultations open to all members of the Conference held last Tuesday, we continued consideration of the request addressed to us by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 46/36L, entitled "Transparency in armaments". These consultations proved very useful. Some small progress has been made, though we have not yet reached agreement on all issues pertaining to the General Assembly's request. Nonetheless, several delegations have stressed the importance of the appointment of a special coordinator for all aspects relating to the issue before us, including all organizational aspects as well as the substantive aspects of this subject. Bearing in mind this agreement, it would be wise to appoint the special coordinator with this general mandate I have just indicated. I intend to do so in the next few days, and I will keep you informed of the choice of the person assigned to these responsibilities.

Allow me now to turn to other matters. With the exception of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, which has already begun its work, and the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, which will hold its next session from 2 to 13 March 1992, the other subsidiary bodies of the Conference are not yet ready to meet. The chairmen of the ad hoc committees have informed the secretariat that they are continuing their consultations with a view to the organization of work and the programme of meetings. Consequently I deemed it superfluous to circulate today a timetable of meetings for next week. The secretariat has requested me to inform you that the opening meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts will take place on Monday, 2 March at 11 a.m. in Conference Room XI, and subsequent meetings will take place daily at 10 a.m. in the same room.

As regards our programme of informal meetings on the substance of agenda items 2 and 3, I would like to inform you that, immediately after the plenary meeting on Thursday, 12 March, the Conference will hold its first meeting devoted to item 2, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear

(The President)

disarmament", so as to give delegations time to prepare their statements. We will hence have two weeks to develop our positions. It is not essential for delegations to put their names down on the list of speakers in advance; nonetheless, it would be helpful if they did so to make it easier for the secretariat to organize the timetable of informal meetings.

Dear friends, with your permission I should like to devote the last part of this plenary meeting to a brief statement. It is not without a degree of emotion that I find myself called upon today to address a few words to His Excellency Ambassador Miljan Komatina, Secretary-General and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on your behalf and on my own behalf. At our next plenary meeting we will not have the honour and pleasure of having him in our midst. Though sad, this is a valuable opportunity to bear witness here once again to Ambassador Komatina of our profound respect and loyal friendship which are engraved on our hearts for the skill, diplomatic savoir faire and experience which he has supplied during seven years of work in the Conference on Disarmament.

Ambassador Miljan Komatina served his country with distinction in a number of diplomatic posts and also performed important duties in his national administration. But undoubtedly it was above all his wisdom, his intelligence and his skills in multilateral affairs that led to his appointment to the post he has occupied with such devotion to date. Ambassador Komatina is a brilliant intellectual, an expert in international relations. He is the author of a number of articles published in the International Foreign Policy Review in Yugoslavia, which in fact awarded him its annual prize for 1983, and he has taught in the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. Each of us will remember his personality radiant with cordiality, overflowing with human warmth and full of zest and youthfulness. And this memory, dear Secretary-General, is perhaps the greatest gift we could offer you, and when you leave this room and this podium, reflect that our deepest friendship will accompany you always and everywhere. Reflect that this friendship is in a way a piece of the heart of each of us which you will be taking with you, far from us. We hope to see you enjoy a happy retirement, peaceful, full of good health and good spirits. We extend to Ambassador Komatina and his charming and pleasant wife Mina our best wishes for this new stage in their lives. Once again, on behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, a hearty thank you and our most sincere congratulations on your work.

I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Mashhadi, who will be speaking as coordinator of the Group of 21.

Mr. MASHHADI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, on behalf of the Group of 21, I would like to take this opportunity in joining you who spoke before me to pay tribute to Ambassador Komatina who was with us in the last eight years and who is retiring now as the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(Mr. Mashhadi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

During the difficult years of the cold war in the 1980s, Ambassador Komatina wisely and efficiently led the secretariat in performing its task which in most cases was challenging if not impossible. In addition to his efficient capability of directing the work of the CD, his personal values, integrity, devotion and ever-smiling face helped us greatly to overcome sometimes unbearable difficulties. His person was an irreplaceable asset to all of us and the Conference. He is leaving us now that the CD has entered a new stage in international relations. Confrontation has given way to cooperation in relations among States and as a result the window of opportunity is opened before us along with its challenges. The CD needs him more than ever before in this new era now that there are great hopes for revitalization of dormant agenda items in our work programme.

The members of the Group of 21 all wish to express their appreciation and thanks to Ambassador Komatina for his valuable contribution to the cause of peace and disarmament. We are sure that although his retirement will deny us his physical presence here, yet the CD will always remember him as a man who contributed immensely to the lofty goals which constituted the raison d'etre of this conference and he will be remembered by all of us and those who will come here after us.

Once again on behalf of the Group of 21 I would like to pay tribute to him and wish him and his family all the best.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement on behalf of the Group of 21. I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, Ambassador Neagu, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. NEAGU (Romania): Mr. President, before delivering my statement, allow me to join the previous speakers who expressed satisfaction at your assumption of the presidency of the Conference for the month of February. I am sure that your tact and great experience will have a decisive influence on the successful conclusion of this phase of our deliberations. I want to assure you that the Romanian delegation will render to you all support in discharging your important duties. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Calovski, the representative of Yugoslavia, who deployed with diligence a great amount of work in order to have a good start to this year's session of the Conference. May I also welcome our new colleagues from Belgium, Ambassador Servais, and from Mongolia, Ambassador Yumjav? I would like to welcome in our midst His Excellency the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Kostarczyk, whose intervention I highly appreciate.

On behalf of the Group consisting of the representatives of Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Russian Federation and Romania, it is an honour for me to express to Ambassador Komatina our deep appreciation for his brilliant diplomatic career and, in particular, his devotion to the cause of curbing the armaments drive, for the competent way he performed his duties as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General at the Conference.

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

As a prominent political personality in his country, in the Non-Aligned Movement and in the United Nations system, Ambassador Komatina needs no introduction. Seven years have elapsed since he reiterated his strong commitment to the common endeavour in the pursuit of disarmament within this multilateral negotiating body entrusted with the most crucial agenda mankind has ever dealt with. During this period he made an active contribution to the progress of the negotiations carried on by the Conference on Disarmament and spared no effort to assist this forum in discharging its responsibilities in the best possible way.

Ambassador Komatina served the Conference with great dedication and brought to the position of CD Secretary-General the diplomatic skills and experience acquired in multilateral affairs and in senior government posts in his country. We all benefited from his many talents and qualities and relied on his advice and support in our work. We would like to emphasize how much we feel privileged to have been working with him, an outstanding international official and a distinguished representative of a friendly country. It is indeed a source of pride for us to be numbered among his personal friends. In a few hours, Ambassador Komatina will be leaving Geneva. May I convey to him our best wishes for an enjoyable well-deserved retirement, happiness in his personal life and the assurance that, whenever he comes to Geneva, he can count on his friends here?

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Romania for his statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, as well as the kind words addressed to myself. I now give the floor to the representative of Australia, Ambassador O'Sullivan, on behalf of the group of Western countries.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Australia): Mr. President, on behalf of the Western group of countries, I would like to join you and other speakers this morning in paying tribute to Ambassador Komatina on this occasion of his last plenary meeting as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Ambassador Komatina's appointment to this important position came, as other speakers have already noted, after a long and distinguished diplomatic career, first in the service of his own country and subsequently in the service of the international community via the United Nations. Over the past eight years, Ambassador Komatina has ably directed the secretariat staff and greatly assisted in the smooth functioning of this Conference. These tasks would not always have been easy to perform, but Ambassador Komatina managed to approach them with his very special combination of tact and vigour. Above all, Ambassador Komatina brought with him, and applied in his position as Secretary-General, a wealth of knowledge and experience which proved invaluable to the Conference as a whole, and more particularly to those of our colleagues who served as Conference President. His service in pursuit of our common goals of peace, security and disarmament are deeply appreciated.

The members of the Western group would like to wish both Ambassador Komatina and his family the very best wishes for his retirement. Perhaps relieved of the pressures of his position he will find time to add to his already impressive list of publications. We look forward to them.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Australia for his statement on behalf of the group of Western countries. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Mr. Hu Xiaodi.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): The Chinese delegation learned with a sense of regret of the impending departure of the distinguished Ambassador Komatina, who will no longer be the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament. Ambassador Komatina comes from a friendly State, Yugoslavia, and he is a renowned diplomat and an expert on disarmament affairs of great international esteem. As the Secretary-General of the Conference as well as Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, he has exerted untiring efforts in promoting the cause of international disarmament and has made a praiseworthy contribution to the smooth functioning of the Conference. His rich experience and his dedication to his work has benefited every one of us in no small way. At the same time, through our cooperation over the past seven years since he took up the post of Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Komatina and the Chinese delegation have built a solid friendship between us. His departure will be an enormous loss for the Conference. However, we can draw some comfort from the expectation that, although Ambassador Komatina will no longer occupy the post of Secretary-General of the Conference, he is bound to maintain a keen interest in our work, and he will provide us in the future with valuable suggestions and guidance. Finally, the Chinese delegation wishes Ambassador Komatina and Mrs. Komatina good health and every success in their private life and future work.

The PRESIDENT: (translated from French): I thank the representative of China for his statement. Now we give the floor to our friend Ambassador Komatina.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations) (translated from French): I am not a speaker on the list - I'm not sure that I have that right. I have often shared my views with you, very often in abundance, individually or in groups, and I should like to avoid repetition. But I would nevertheless like to say a few words of a personal rather than professional nature. I am very touched and moved by the kind words which have been addressed to me by you, Mr. President, and by the representatives of Poland, Hungary, Canada, Japan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Romania, Australia and China, speaking on their own behalf or on behalf of their groups. This is yet another testimony of the friendship which I have always received and continue to receive from my colleagues of all generations, your predecessors just as much as yourselves.

I am leaving the Conference with a feeling, if not of a "mission accomplished", at least of a mission that has succeeded. I do not say this as an empty boast or with false modesty. Since there is no such thing as a mission that is totally accomplished in the field in which we work, I view my mission as a successful one in the sense that I have always sought, sometimes

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even found, at any rate I have tried to identify points in common in divergent positions and to build bridges between the different viewpoints whenever and wherever that was possible. I have spared no effort to reconcile, to overcome divisions, at least as far as the functioning of the Conference goes, and if I haven't succeeded, it is not because I haven't tried.

The second comment I wish to make is to offer you my apologies for having tried to "take French leave" in a cowardly manner. This is linked purely to personal reasons connected with my frame of mind. First of all, I don't like ceremonies involving leave-taking, separation or departure, because very often, if not always, they are sad. A poet said that to leave is always to die a little. But I would say that to change is always to be reborn a little. At any rate, I prefer to control my feelings and take them away with me. However, the main reason lies in the fact that I am experiencing a kind of mourning, with the feeling of participating in a sort of funeral procession. Even though I may be "out of order" in speaking of this, I would like to share this feeling with you, because the problems are linked with the events that affect security. This is due, as you may have guessed, to what is going on in and around my native country - in my country, and I add around it, because, without entering into details, the responsibilities are not attributable solely to backward Balkan nationalism leading to balkanization or heaven knows what. There is a power game, a kind of geopolitics which has been revived with harmful consequences. Those who are familiar with history will understand this, because it is being repeated in a striking fashion. The English short story writer Saki correctly noted that the Balkans produce more history than they can consume. At any rate, I have the impression of going back in time.

I used to represent a different country, a country of which I was proud. Yugoslavia is not, as far as I'm concerned, one nation, still less one religion, one ideology or social system that has been wrongly christened with different names at different times, but rather it is an ongoing enterprise of solidarity and reconciliation among peoples, nations and minorities with different historical, religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds which have too often been manipulated and pitted one against the other. These peoples have for the first time in their history lived in peace for almost half a century, and an immense effort has been made to forget the massacres of the Second World War, genocides even, which were perpetrated on their territory and between themselves. Recent developments, unfortunately, have highlighted the risk that the bonds of cohesion, coherence, may be entirely shattered. Despite optimism that these bonds will be maintained at least in part - and ultimately they will be re-established sooner or later - I cannot help regarding these developments as a kind of personal setback, though I hope only a temporary one. I was wrong to believe that at least certain aspects of Realpolitik had changed, if not disappeared, in a Europe which is writing a new page of its history. But as Plato said - I learned this a bit too late - individual ethics is never identical to political ethics. I hope I will have

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the strength to avoid bitterness, cynicism or doom-preaching. I certainly do not wish to give up hope, still less to wash my hands of the matter. There are always things to be done, a number of struggles to be waged against the backward drift. Perhaps we in Yugoslavia didn't have enough time to consolidate our federal system; other countries required a whole century to consolidate the achievements of their revolutions, and sometimes this involved civil war. I have been inspired to say these few words by an article by the American Ambassador in Belgrade that appeared in a Yugoslav paper, but this is scant consolation for what happened in my country, which I hope will not happen again.

I have tried to serve the Conference in an impartial, committed and active fashion, always trying to reconcile the neutrality of an international civil servant with my personal convictions, without losing my identity, preserving a critical outlook, remaining open to criticism and prepared to correct myself. If, as Kant said, I cannot boast that I have always said what I thought, I can at least claim that I have never said what I did not think. My task was greatly facilitated because I was surrounded by effective colleagues. To name them all would be a difficult endeavour, because they all deserve special mention. However, I cannot fail to congratulate Ambassador Berasategui, my deputy until today, on his appointment to new responsibilities. You are all acquainted with him and no words of introduction are necessary.

At another level, I would like to underscore that I was lucky in being involved in the Conference at a period of extremely important changes. While this is not the "end of history", these events do offer new prospects for a different mode of operation of the international system, the emergence of a different world and gradually perhaps even a new world. These changes create the conditions, if not for the harmonious development of inter-State relations, at least for a higher degree of the gradual unification of values and conduct. I say this without, of course, overlooking the formidable obstacles with which this path is fraught. This process is not pre-ordained either in one direction or the other. Vigilant efforts will be required to translate these potentialities and energies into practice and to extend the values which we want to promote in our national societies, to extend themn and translate them into international life. If we fail to do this, what has been accomplished will be elusive and may be lost. For if we have learnt anything at all from recent developments, it is that stability based on military supremacy, reflected in the arms race, or on permanent manoeuvres to blunt international contradictions by means of improvized compromises without resolving them would be fragile.

Arms control and disarmament has indeed begun in recent years, but to continue along this path we need new approaches which would deepen the process, speed it up and above all offer it qualitatively new dimensions. Such approaches would make it possible to penetrate into the "grey areas"

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which thus far have remained beyond us, such as the problem of cooperation in military technologies, the arms trade, production and use of weapons of mass destruction, non-proliferation and especially the establishment of a common system of security. All this cannot be done unless recourse is continuously made to the United Nations as the source of initiatives and the nucleus of the new international order.

As for the Conference, it is beginning to change gradually, and sometimes in an imperceptible way, in parallel with the changes in the system of international relations. As with all institutions, they lag behind what is going on in real life. Our Conference, however, represents more than just an institution; it represents a concept of international cooperation in disarmament and a process that generates universal responsibility for security. To use its full potential we must begin first and foremost by understanding what is taking place in the world, by understanding the nature of change, being clear about what has really changed and what has remained the same. It is perhaps still too early to sketch an overall picture or draw final conclusions. The changes were sudden, surprising, unpredictable, if not in their substance and direction, at least in their immediate consequences, and they do not all work in the same direction, the desired direction. What is certain is that the nature of the conflict has changed; the balance of strength has become fragile, the operation of the international system has improved; but the factors of destabilization and the challenges have diversified. The nature of the system has been only superficially transformed, with inequalities that have become more marked and new cases of marginalization that have emerged. One should never forget that 80 per cent of people remain unaffected by the new trends in international life. Disarmament has acquired new dimensions and plays a different role, but it does not cover all military activities. We do not yet know how the vacuum created by the change that has occurred on the global scene will be filled. But if, as we expect, disarmament becomes a common endeavour and a norm in present-day life through ongoing negotiations, the role of the Conference will be strengthened and negotiations would, of necessity become multilateralized.

To achieve this, our Conference must nevertheless make a bold commitment to defining new tasks which, without abandoning the negotiated character of disarmament treaties, could participate in different, more flexible ways in the elaboration of security systems and the new agenda. There is no problem that the Conference could not take up in exploring what is immediately feasible to improve conditions and broadening the space for future negotiations. Realism should not, however, be conceived of as the granting of concessions to the "other side", the lowering of sights or the transformation of the Conference into a debating club. It is more a question of mutual understanding of what can be achieved today and tomorrow and making a commitment to this in a climate of complete transparency of positions and responsibilities.

(Mr. Komatina, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

The Conference is an institution for the democratization of international life and for collective participation in a field that historically was the preserve of the major Powers or those which possessed powerful armaments. While there is something true in the globalization of problems, their globalization, interdependence, disarmament and security problems will become increasingly multilateral, and not in the technical sense reflected in the number of negotiators or participants in the negotiations but in the conceptual sense. The Conference must not only survive but continue in the new conditions to play a central role. To what extent this general trend towards multilateralization will be reflected in the facts will depend on our ability to understand the new agenda, our readiness to act and adapt our goals and means. If the problem is approached in this manner, the boundaries between multilateral, regional and bilateral negotiations will gradually disappear. I am certain that the Conference is on the threshold of making history with the convention on chemical weapons by elaborating the most comprehensive system of security and cooperation in the history of disarmament, which of course would strengthen its role and give it self-confidence. The Conference, in the shape of all that it contains, reflects or implies, is a complex endeavour all of whose effects are difficult to gauge, but to the extent that the process of standardizing criteria for analysing and synthesizing the new realities continues, we may view its future with optimism. We should avoid the risk that the defeat of fundamentalist ideologies will become the defeat of ideas, or that the failure of one aggressive ideology will be replaced by others.

Mr. President, dear colleagues and friends, I reiterate my very sincere thanks to all of you. I extend my best wishes to each of you in your private lives and in your work, and I wish the Conference every success.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): This sustained ovation bears eloquent witness to the interest and the attention with which each of us followed the important statement by our friend, Secretary-General Ambassador Komatina. Through that statement we have yet once again noted his wealth of intelligence, his sensitivity, his dynamism and his commitment, all of which will be denied to us by his departure. On behalf of all of you, and on my own behalf, once again we wish to thank Ambassador Komatina for his major contribution to the work of the Conference.

There are no further matters before us today, and so I shall adjourn the meeting, requesting the distinguished representatives to remain in the room for a few minutes after the meeting is adjourned. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Thursday 5 March at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.